

OBSERVATIONS PARTAGÉES

The work of the Observatory

* **Symposium *Cultural Rights and Democratization in Tunisia***

The *Observatory for diversity and cultural rights* co-organized, with the Ministry for National Education, the Ministry of Culture and the UNESCO September 29th, 30th and October 1st an international symposium in Tunisia on the theme of *Cultural Rights and Democratization*. Many partners were associated to this event: the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the "Organisation internationale de la Francophonie", who made the event possible; the Arab Institute for Human Rights (IADH) and many researchers of the ARADESC network, who gave inputs in the panels; teachers and inspectors of all regions of the country as well as various civil society stakeholders who contributed actively in the debates and discussions.

The symposium's goals, as a follow up of the January symposium in [Rabat](#), were to help define the place of Cultural Rights in the democratization process and to propose initiatives and synergies for the construction of a strong democracy in the country. For the Tunisian revolution to remain a call for « dignity », democratization has to coincide with the creation of an appropriated democratic culture. Cultural Rights are therefore at the core of the fulfillment of all fundamental Human Rights. The elections of October 23rd represent a first step towards achieving this goal. A synthetic note was elaborated at the end of the symposium and its road map is in discussion and will be presented in our next OP!

See the [concept note](#) of the symposium (*in French*)

* **Seminar on the recommendations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to Switzerland**

On October 5th, the *Observatory*, in collaboration with the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights and the Swiss Center of expertise in Human Rights (SCHR), organized a first seminar on the recommendations issued by the Committee on ESCR to Switzerland. Its aims were to apprehend challenges, identify obstacles and make propositions that would help Switzerland fulfill the Committee's recommendations before its next periodic report. Representatives of concerned federal authorities, the academy and civil society divided therefore into 5 thematic working groups. The results and propositions of the seminar will be presented in Spring 2012 to the new Parliament.

Observed at the Human Rights Council...

* **Public consultation of the Independent Expert in the field of Cultural Rights on the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications**

The **Independent Expert in the field of Cultural Rights**, Mrs. Farida Shaheed, invites all stakeholders to inform her third report dedicated to the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, as defined in article 27 of

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News on the *Fribourg Declaration*

What does it mean to declare cultural rights? The **commentary of each article of the *Fribourg Declaration*** is now [published](#) and gives precious analysis of many delicate issues. We are working on the English translation but, in the mean time, show your [support to the Declaration!](#)

On the agenda...

- * **Until November 15th: [Public consultation](#)** on the measures taken by Switzerland to ensure **respect for cultural diversity**. The responses to the questionnaire will inform the report that will be presented to UNESCO in April 2012.
- * **November 14th to December 2nd: the [47th session](#) of the **Committee on economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR)**** will examine the periodic reports of Argentina, Cameroon, Estonia, Israel and Turkmenistan.
- * **November 21st to 25th: Training course on **Understanding economic, social and cultural rights**** to take place in the Geneva Academy of international humanitarian law and Human Rights. See the [program](#) and follow the news [on the website!](#)
- * **December 2nd: *New medias: drivers of democratization and development?*** See the program of this symposium organized in Basel by the [Novartis](#) foundation.
- * **January 20th 2012: Deadline** to propose candidates for the Committee on ESCR. Read the last [news](#) here.!

To see on the internet!

- * Throughout this year, the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** has pursued a series of expert

third report dedicated to the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The questionnaire, available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#), proposes fifteen questions that have to be answered and returned at the email [address of the mandate](#) before **November 25th 2011**. Your experience counts, so do answer!

For information, you'll find below the links to the report of the Expert on access to cultural heritage (2011) that was also written following a similar consultation.

[Read the report of the Expert on access to heritage](#)

* ***The role of languages and culture in the protection of well-being and identity of indigenous peoples****

On September 20th, the Human Rights Council dedicated half a day of its 18th session to a panel on *the role of languages and culture in the protection of well-being and identity of indigenous peoples*. Apart from the Deputy High Commissioner of Human Rights Mrs. Kang, the panel was made up of the Special rapporteur on indigenous people, Mr. James Anaya, Mr. Vital Bambanze of the expert mechanism on the rights of indigenous people, Mr. Javier Lopez Sanchez, director of the National Institute for indigenous languages of Mexico and Mr. Lester Coyne, former National Chairperson of the Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages. The central function of cultural rights to achieve respect for human dignity and the importance that needs to be given to linguistic and cultural diversities were at the core of the discussions, attended by many delegations of Europe, America and Asia.

This event sheds light on two major issues for the fulfillment of Cultural Rights:

- * The importance of indigenous peoples as leaders in the field of advocacy for the respect and promotion of Cultural Rights;
- * Considering the absence of the African continent, the need to persist in promoting the universal and fundamental character of these rights for all, beyond the restricted question of minorities.

** We thank M. Bal for his account of the meeting*

See and hear the discussions at the panel through the [webcast](#) (available in English and original language)

sioner for Human Rights has pursued a series of expert consultations on freedom of expression and incitement to racial, national and religious hatred. After the European meeting in Vienna (02/2011), the African one in Nairobi (04/2011) and the Asian one in Bangkok (07/2011), the last regional meeting took place in Santiago de Chile October 12th and 13th. Find [here](#) the different documents and developments on this thematic.

* **Culture et démocratie**

(Belgium) published the results of their appeal on « [Privilégier le dialogue, refuser le nationalisme](#) » in the last issue of its journal. Find out what was said on the use of cultural identity in political discourses.

See also in this organization's Third Paper ([cahier 3](#)) the results of two years of round table debates on the theme of « Culture in education: from utopia to reality » (*both in French*).

- * **ARADESC:** The book presenting contrasted observations of Cultural Rights in the Maghreb and Egypt (before the revolutions!) is fully available in French on the [internet](#). Arabic translation will soon follow.



- * IThe **Observatório Itaú Cultural** published an article from Patrice Meyer-Bisch on the medial position of Cultural Rights in the relation between cultural diversity and human rights. For those of you reading [Portuguese!](#)

Observed by...

* **The Interdisciplinary Centre on Cultural Rights**

The first year of the research project on slave practices in Mauritania concluded on a bitter note: protests and violence are shaking the country. Many people contest the methods chosen to conduct the census, methods that would tend to exclude a large part of the population from their Mauritanian nationality. Questioning the legitimacy of many peoples' identity and belonging to the nation brings once again Cultural Rights at the heart of processes of peace and violence in the country, and reminds us of the significance of the works already conducted in Nouakchott during previous symposiums: *Cultural Rights and the Treatment of Violence* (2008, acts published in French by l'Harmattan) and *Cultural Rights and Reconciliation* (2010, acts soon to be published).



* **The Swiss national Commission for UNESCO**

September 15 and 16, the Swiss national commission for UNESCO gave its patronage to a symposium organised in Geneva by the Swiss Society for African Studies, the Laboratory for Archaeology and African Populating (Anthropology Unit of the University of Geneva) and the Centre for the Study of International Legal Cooperation (CECOJI, CNRS) on the theme: « [African memory jeopardized. Plunders and restitutions of African cultural and anthropological heritage](#) » (*in French*).

Published

- * **Drout de cité pour les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels: la Charte québécois en chantier.** Pierre Bosset, Lucie Lamarche (directed by) Cowansville: Yvon Blais



eds., 2011, 615 p.

Integrating certain economic, social and cultural rights in the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* has always been somewhat problematic: rights or values, the question is still open.

The fourteen texts gathered in this book were written by knowledgeable authors who've accepted to reflect assuming a certain degree of legal norm, even the certainty of legal norm, of economic, social and cultural rights of individuals as fundamental rights. This reflection can only be incomplete. Nevertheless, it represents an improvement and a further stone in the edification of a Quebec doctrine on these rights. *Free translation of the editor's presentation.*

[Find this publication here](#)

- * **L'hospitalité politique par la langue?** Working paper (DT) 19 of the IIEDH, directed by P. Meyer-Bisch, 2011, 60 p.



L'hospitalité politique par la langue ?



Pierre Meyer-Bisch (ed.)

Mai 2011

de Anne Fort

The XIII the Summit of the Francophonie, staged in Montreux in October 2010, was the leitmotiv to many initiatives that punctuated the whole year in Switzerland. Amongst other activities, General States of French language in the French speaking countries were organized. The *Observatory for diversity and cultural rights* took part in this process with a workshop on the topic of « *Can a language be a sign of political hospitality?* ». The rich exchanges it raised are gathered in this working paper (document de travail), now available online on the Observatory's website

[Read the working paper](#) (in French only)

- * **Who has the right to culture?** European meetings in Avignon, Aix-en-Provence, Arles, coll. Festivals, Avignon: Avignon university editions, 2011, 189 p.

This small booklet sums up the essential elements of the 2010 European Meetings that took place in the framework of the European year for combating poverty and social exclusion. Initiated by the *Festival of Avignon*, the meetings offer a space to reflect on and consider the European project through arts and culture. The 2010 edition focused on the issues of Cultural Rights and on the mechanisms of social exclusion. The publication takes the form of a dialogue between the panellists who took part in the meetings, and picks up the main arguments of their contributions on the role of creation towards exclusion and on the right to culture. The last part briefly presents the panellists.

[Order the publication from the editor](#)

Listen online to the debates (in French): [Combattre l'exclusion](#) / [Culture, de quel droit?](#)

- * **Correspondances citoyennes en Europe: Les migrations au cœur de la construction européenne.** Auteurs: association l'Age de la tortue, 2011.



The migrations and population blends characteristic of today's Europe translate into a growing diversity of cultural references in our cities, but also in apprehensions towards a dilution of social links and common identification marks that encourage identitarian closures and growing xenophobia. How can this diversity become a strength for Europe?

From September 2010 to February 2011, a team of artists and social scientists left their home to meet persons living in Rennes (France), Cluj (Romania) and Tarragona (Spain) and imagined with them *Correspondances*. These took different forms and tried to foster exchanges and deepen thoughts about migrations, discriminations, otherness and multilingualism. The results of these dialogues are available in a book and a DVD that recount the steps of the project.

[To learn more about the project and its results](#) (Available in French, Catalan, Spanish and Romanian)

To read the previous numbers of our newsletter *Observations partagées*, consult our website: www.culturalrights.info.

For questions or comments, send an email to the following email address: iedh@unifr.ch. To erase your name from this list, simply write « Stop » as object of the message!



Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

*The Observatory for diversity and cultural rights is an
observation network with its seat at the IIEDH, operating
in partnership with the International Organisation of the
Francophonie and the UNESCO Chairs' network*



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